



LEADER'S GUIDE TO MANAGING PERSONNEL IN DISTRESS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Commanders and first sergeants regularly encounter individuals in distress within their units. To assist leaders in supporting their personnel experiencing difficulties that lie across the continuum of distress, from mild to severe, a Leader's Guide has been developed.

The purposes for the guide are:

- To provide information for leaders on a wide range of topics related to distress.
- To enhance users' knowledge of available resources.
- To enhance users' capacity to tailor support to specific situations.
- To enhance peer support and self-care strategies.
- To enhance Force Health Protection and mission readiness.

The guide is an interactive tool to enhance communication and targeted action by leaders, their personnel, and community support staff. The guide also serves to strengthen leaders' effectiveness at information gathering by providing essential information and advice. It provides general information, summaries of policy, and checklists on 35 topics relating to distress. The guide is not intended to act as a replacement for mental health, legal or other professional advice but provides readily accessible and practical guidance to leaders.

Emotional well-being has been shown to have a substantial impact on both physical health and work performance. By addressing a broad range of topics relating to distress, the guide provides leaders with tools to help improve the overall fitness, readiness, and performance of their units.

According to Air Force Doctrine, Force Health Protection "addresses all health-related threats affecting the combat force and the supporting community before, during, and after deployment." Force health protection is the life-cycle maintenance program for the human weapon system. Attending to the preventive aspects of health, including psychological aspects, is essential for maintaining a healthy and fit force. The guide is designed to assist leaders with this area.

TABLE OF TOPICS COVERED IN THE LEADER'S GUIDE

Topic	Topic
1. Alcohol and Drug Abuse	20. Death of Someone Close
2. Anxiety (Nervousness)	21. Fire/Destruction of Property
3. Civilian Personnel	22. Financial Pressures
4. Critical Incidents/Death of a Unit Member/Pre-Exposure Preparation	23. Separation/Retirement
5. Depression	24. Support During Administrative Separation
6. Domestic Violence and Family Maltreatment	25. Commander Directed Evaluations/Profiles/Medical Boards
7. Suicidal Behaviors	26. Psychiatric Hospitalization
8. Work Related Violence	27. Following Up Personnel in Distress
9. Work Related Stressors	28. Integrated Delivery System and Other Community Organizations/Resources
10. New Assignment/PCS	29. Deployment and Operational Stressors
11. Special Family Needs	30. Homeland Security and Distress
12. Legal Problems	31. Unintentional Injury and Safety
13. Medical Problems	32. Work Performance Problems
14. Sexual Assault and Rape	33. Natural Helpers—B.A.S.I.C. Peer Support
15. Sexually Harassed/Stalked	34. Self Care in Distress Prevention
16. Physical Assault	35. Leadership in Action—Strategies for Distress Prevention and Management
17. Automobile Accident	
18. Robbery/Burglary Crime Victim	
19. Relationship/Marital Problems	